

NSC BRIEFING

15 September 1960

CONGO

I. Confusion surrounds coup attempted by army commander Joseph Mobutu.

- A. Latest press report is that Lumumba followers claiming Mobutu arrested and he still in control.
- B. However, Mobutu told newsmen early on 15 September that both Kasavubu and Lumumba were under guard in their homes in Leopoldville.

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C.

Lumumba departed for Stanleyville yesterday.

- D. If he has indeed gone to Stanleyville, it is probably to organize civil war against Mobutu.

II. Mobutu's coup appears intended to block Congo's slide into Communist orbit.

- A. Mobutu proposes that Congo to be run until 31 December by "collect" of students and technicians with political truce in effect to let factions iron out differences.
- B. Mobutu announced cooperation with UN, and ordered Soviet and Czech diplomats to get out of Congo within 48 hours.
 - 1. Communist embassies and consulates reportedly being put under military guard 15 September.
- C. Kasavubu-Ileo team were proving unable to counter effectively Lumumba and Communist advisors.
 - 1. Moved with "speed of snail" and continued to ignore advice of US embassy officials who characterized Kasavubu as "acting more like a vegetable every day".

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- D. Mobutu, aged 30, reasonably intelligent but as ex-newspaperman he lacks military background or political training. As army chief of staff he dominated C-in-C Gen. Lundula (ex-sergeant)
- B. Appointed by Illo to be army commander on 14 September, but past close identity with Lumumba political movement may make him suspect in some moderate quarters.

III. UN Security Council postponing action on Hammarskjold's request for stronger action in Congo pending some clarification of situation.

- A. On 14 September voted down USSR attempt seat Lumumba delegation.
- B. Adjourned late on 14 September after Tunisia suggested good offices committee try to resolve constitutional crisis in Congo. This has not come to a vote. SC will meet again today.
 - 1. Previous session of 12 September adjourned when apparent wavering African support of UN Command in Congo was almost certain to help Lumumba rather than Kasavubu. Hammarskjold wants Lumumba "broken."

IV. Prior to Mobutu's coup, Communist nations were becoming increasingly involved in Congo.

- A. Khrushchev, in his strongest attack on Hammarskjold's handling of the Congo crisis, charged on 13 September that the secretary general is "consciously working in the interests of the imperialists."
 - 1. Zorin particularly biting in attack on 14 September in Security Council.

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